of Iran issued on 25th January, 2003, in New Delhi, envisaged various bilateral measures for furthering of mutual socio-economic interests;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of steps taken by both sides towards implementation of the same, so far;

(d) whether any assessment of the status of the joint declaration made following the change of regime in Iran recently; and

(e) if so, the conclusions thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Yes. The New Delhi Declaration signed between India and Iran on 25th January, 2003 puts forth the vision of strategic partnership between the two countries touching all aspects of bilateral relations-mutual economic cooperation, cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons, science and technology, information technology, education and training, reconstruction of Afghanistan, international terrorism, and other global issues. In pursuance of this vision, the two countries have entered into agreements for cooperation, *inter-alia,* in science and technology, hydrocarbons sector, cultural exchanges, transit of goods, vocational training & urban water management and operationalization of a line of credit. In addition, there is a Joint Economic Commission at the level of Ministers, which meets regularly to promote bilateral economic cooperation. Interaction between India and Iran in the security and strategic spheres has also been institutionalised for enhanced regional and global cooperation.

(d) to (e) President Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad has taken over office in Iran on August 3, 2004. His cabinet is yet to be finalised. Government of India will work closely with the new Government in Iran to further implement the Joint Declaration for forging a strategic partnership between India and Iran.

Indo-EU Partnership

2567. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether EU have finalized plan for partnership with India;

(b) if so, whether the EU and India have agreed on a strategic relationship and partnership;

(c) if so, whether action plan is being finalized so that both countries go ahead with the operations; and

(d) if so, to what extent agreement between India and EU has been finalized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the fifth India-EU Summit held in The Hague, the Netherlands on November 08, 2004 launched the Strategic Partnership between India and the EU, in recognition of the growing stature of India as a major regional and global player. The Summit took note of the progress made in strengthening the India-EU relationship since the first Summit in 2000.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir, the two sides are presently working together on finalizing an India-EU Joint Action Plan. It is expected to be finalized in time for the 6th India-EU Summit to be held in New Delhi next month.

Torture of Indians abroad

2568. DR. PRABHA THAKUR:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI C. PERUMAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Indian workers working in Gulf countries, Singapore and Malaysia are tortured brutally and Indian Embassies have failed to take any action;

(b) if so, the details of torture, beheading, whipping mercilessly of Indian workers reported during the last one year;

(c) whether Government have taken up the matter with these countries; and

(d) if so, the response of these countries so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Some cases of maltreatment of Indian